REMARKS

The present response is intended to be fully responsive to all points of objection and/or rejection raised by the Examiner and is believed to place the application in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and allowance of the application is respectfully requested.

Applicants assert that the present invention is new, non-obvious and useful. Prompt consideration and allowance of the claims is respectfully requested.

Status of Claims

Claims 14 – 23 and 34 - 46 are pending in the application and have been rejected. The numbering of Claim 46 has been corrected.

Claims 14 and 37 have been amended in order to more clearly define what the Applicants consider to be the invention. Claim 37 has been amended to include the limitations of Claim 38, now cancelled. New claim 47 has been added. Applicants respectfully assert that no new matter has been added.

The Telephone Interview

Initially, Applicants wish to thank the Examiner, Dave Robertson, for granting and attending the telephone interview, with Applicants' Representative, Heidi M. Brun, Reg. No. 34,504 on December 10, 2008. In the interview, claim 14 was discussed, as was the Hirose citation.

CLAIM REJECTIONS

35 U.S.C. § 102 Rejections

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 14 – 23 and 34 - 46 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), as being anticipated by Hirose (US Patent 5,710,921). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection in view of the remarks that follow.

Hirose does not have an interface to two different systems. Hirose has a user interface; however, the user interface interfaces only to the workflow system (see Fig. 1). As a result, Hirose does not have "... said interface enabling information about a current instance of said selected workflow to pass between said workflow system and said collaboration system such that actors of said current instance of a selected workflow can collaborate in said collaboration system for said workflow" as recited in amended claim 14. Hirose does not have two separate systems that pass information to each other.

The fact that a workflow system enables collaboration on a complex project, as mentioned by the Examiner in his Response to Arguments, teaches that a workflow system enables multiple people to work on the same project. It does not teach separate systems, nor an interface to all of the separate systems. Nor does it teach to provide an "... interface enabling information about a current instance of said selected workflow to pass between said workflow system and said collaboration system" as now recited in amended claim 14. In some claims, there is also documentation of the collaboration.

It must be appreciated that there is a distinction between collaboration by predesigned (choreographed (in Workflow terminology)) scenarios, and out-of-ordered, but called on demand, unplanned collaboration with other actors of the workflow. The herein claimed invention does address this issue. By providing an interface to both systems and passing information therebetween, it provides a method for unplanned collaboration about the workflow at hand, whose participants would be, on one hand, the person in charge of the current step, and, on the other hand, a person (or persons) picked by the person in charge, on the spot, based on the specific situation encountered and the on-line availability and roles of the colleagues around.

This is not possible with Hirose, since only the person in charge of a workflow step is allowed to input information into the, so called, packet of information (first lines of column 7 of Hirose). Moreover, the packet proceeds to the person in charge of the next step. There is no location where the "actors of said current instance ... can collaborate in said collaboration system for said workflow".

Hirose does not teach or suggest a single screen. To the contrary, he suggests multiple screens (the user interface in his Fig. 2) – the antithesis of the herein claimed invention. Hirose teaches how to perform a workflow, but does not discuss how to optimize it by having

both the interface to the workflow system and also an interface to a collaboration system on the same computer screen.

Reference is made to the herein Specification where the advantages of having both the interface to the workflow system and also an interface to a collaboration system on the same computer screen are explained.

> "The activity window in FIG. 2B is an approval portlet 34, which asks Gordon to approve Joe's flight request. ... FIG. 2B also shows a collaboration portlet 36, similar to a collaboration window 22 of FIG. 1, in which Gordon can communicate with Joe about his request. .. Gordon can copy any of the data in approval portlet 34 into communication portlet 36 to ease writing of his question or to comment to Joe..." (Paragraph 23).

> "FIG. 2C shows a flight book portlet 38, a flight select portlet 40 and a collaboration portlet 42. Mary may utilize flight book portlet 38 to book a flight ... If she has a question for Joe, she may use collaboration portlet 42... Once Mary has finished reserving the flight, she may want to use collaboration portlet 42 to inform ..." (Paragraph 25).

By having the workflow and collaboration interfaces in the same window, it allows the various users to work more efficiently. This cannot be achieved at all by Hirose, and he never even considers the issue.

As regards claim 37, Hirose does not teach nor suggest "*a collaboration system within which any actor of a current instance of a selected workflow can collaborate with any other actor of said instance.*" Instead, each step in Hirose involves a specific "person in charge," as explained above.

Moreover, Hirose does not show nor discuss "providing a list of said actors of a current instance of a selected workflow to said collaboration system" since Hirose does not have two systems, as discussed hereinabove, nor does he teach providing a list from one to the other.

Accordingly, Applicants assert that Hirose does not teach nor suggest the limitations of claims 14 or 37. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that independent claims 14 and 37 are allowable. Claims 15 – 23 and 37 – 47 depend from, directly or indirectly, claims 14 and 37 and therefore include all the limitations of those claims. Therefore, Applicants resepectfully assert that claims 15 – 23 and 37 – 47 are likewise allowable. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw the rejections and allow claims 14 – 23 and 37 – 47.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the ending claims are deemed to be allowable. Their favorable reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner have any question or comment as to the form, content or entry of this Amendment, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number below. Similarly, if there are any further issues yet to be resolved to advance the prosecution of this application to issue, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned counsel.

Respectfully submitted,

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